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To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *January* the 16th, 1755.

——*Quicquid Græcia mendax*
Audet in hiſtoriâ.—— JUV.

AS the French have lately introduced an entire new method of writing hiſtory, and as it is to be preſumed we ſhall be as ready to ape them in this, as in all other faſhions; I ſhall lay before the public a looſe ſketch of ſuch rules as I have been able haſtily to throw together for preſent uſe, till ſome great and diſtinguiſhed critic may have leiſure to collect his ideas, and publiſh a more complete and regular ſyſtem of the modern art of writing hiſtory.

FOR the ſake of brevity I ſhall enter at once upon my ſubject, and addreſs my inſtruction to the future hiſtorian.

REMEMBER to prefix a long preface to your hiſtory, in which you will have a right to ſay whatever comes into your head: for all that relates to your hiſtory may with propriety be admitted, and all that is foreign to the purpoſe may claim a place in it, becauſe it is a preface.

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It will be ſufficient therefore if I give you only a hint upon the occaſion, which if you manage with dexterity, or rather audacity, will ſtand you in great ſtead.

BESURE you ſeize every opportunity of introducing the moſt extravagant commendations of Tacitus; but be careful how you enter too minutely into any particulars you may have heard of that writer, for fear of diſcovering that you have *only* heard of them. The ſafeſt way will be to keep to the old cuſtom of abuſing all other hiſtorians, and vilifying them in compariſon of him. But in the execution of this, let me entreat you to do a little violence to your modeſty, by avoiding every inſinuation that may ſet him an inch above yourſelf.

BEFORE you enter upon your work, it will be neceſſary to diveſt yourſelf entirely of all regard for truth. To conquer this prejudice may perhaps coſt you ſome pains; but till you have effectually overcome it, you will find innumerable difficulties continually obtruding themſelves to thwart your deſign of writing an entertaining hiſtory in the modern taſte.

THE next thing is to find out ſome ſhrewd reaſon for rejecting all ſuch authentic papers as are come to light ſince the period you are writing of was laſt conſidered: for if you cannot cleverly keep clear of them, you will be obliged to make uſe of them; and then your performance may be called dull and dry; which is a cenſure you ought as carefully to avoid, as to contend for that famous compliment which was paid the author of the hiſtory of Charles the twelfth, by his moſt illuſtrious patron, who is himſelf an hiſtorian, *Plus beau que la verité.*

I AM aware of the maxim of Polybius, "that hiſtory "void of truth, is an empty ſhadow." But the motto of this paper may ſerve to convict that dogmatiſt of ſingularity, by ſhewing that his own countrymen diſavowed his

his pretended axiom even to a proverb. Though we may allow truth to the firſt hiſtorian of any particular æra, the nature of things requires that truth muſt gradually recede in proportion to the frequency of treating the ſame period; or elſe the laſt hand would be abſolutely precluded from every advantage of novelty. It is fit therefore that we modernize the maxim of Polybius, by ſubſtituting the word WIT in the place of TRUTH; but as all writers are not bleſſed with a ready ſtore of wit, it may be neceſſary to lay down ſome other rules for the compiling of hiſtory, in which it is expedient that we avail ourſelves of all the artifices which either have been or may be made uſe of to ſurpriſe, charm, ſadden, or confound the mind of the reader.

In treating of times that have been often written upon, there can be no ſuch thing as abſolute novelty; therefore the only method to be taken in ſuch caſes, is to give every occurrence a new turn. You may take the ſide of Philip of Macedon againſt Demoſthenes and the obſtinate republicans; and you will have many inſtances to ſhew how wantonly whole ſeas of blood have been ſhed for the ſake of thoſe two infatuating ſounds, LIBERTY and RELIGION. It was a lucky hit of an Engliſh biographer, that of writing the vindication and panegyric of Richard the third: and I would adviſe you to attempt ſomething of the like nature. For inſtance. You may undertake to ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of our high opinion of queen Elizabeth, and our falſe notions of the happineſs of her government. For as to lives and characters, you have one principal rule to obſerve; and that is, to elevate the bad, and depreciate the good. But in writing the characters of others, always keep your own (if you have any value for it) in view; and never allow to any great perſonage a virtue which you either feel the want of, or a notorious diſregard for. You may queſtion the moral character of

Socrates,

Socrates, the chaſtity of Cyrus, the conſtancy of the martyrs, the piety and ſincerity of the reformers, the bravery of Cromwell, and the military talents of king William: and you need never fear the finding authorities to ſupport you in any detraction among the writers of anecdotes, ſince Dion Caſſius, a grave hiſtorian, has confidently aſſerted that Cicero proſtituted his wife, trained up his ſon in drunkenneſs, committed inceſt with his daughter, and lived in adultery with Cerellia.

I COME next to ornaments; under which head I conſider ſentences, prodigies, digreſſions and deſcriptions. On the two firſt I ſhall not detain you, as it will be ſufficient to recommend a free uſe of them, and to be new, if you can. Of digreſſions you may make the greateſt uſe, by calling them to your aid whenever you are at a fault. If you want to ſwell your hiſtory to a folio, and have only matter for an octavo (ſuppoſe, for example, it were the ſtory of Alexander) you may enter into an enquiry of what that adventurer would have done if he had not been poiſoned: whether his conqueſts, or Kouly Khan's were the moſt extraordinary: what would have been the conſequence of his marching weſtward; and whether he would have beat the duke of Marlborough. You may alſo introduce in this place a diſſertation upon fire-arms, or the art of fortification. In deſcriptions, you muſt not be ſparing, but out-go every thing that has been attempted before you. Let your battles be the moſt bloody, your ſieges the moſt obſtinate, your caſtles the moſt impregnable, your commanders the moſt conſummate, and their ſoldiers the moſt intrepid. In deſcribing a ſea-fight, let the enemy's fleet be the moſt numerous, and their ſhips the largeſt that ever were known. Do not ſcruple to burn a thouſand ſhips, and turn their crews half ſcorched into the ſea; there let them ſurvive awhile by ſwimming, that you may have an opportunity

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of jamming them between their own and the enemy's veſſels: and when you have gone through the dreadful diſtreſſes of the action, conclude by blowing up the admiral's own ſhip, and ſcattering officers of the greateſt birth and bravery in the air. In the ſacking of a town, murder all the old men and young children in the cruelleſt manner, and in the moſt ſacred retreats. Deviſe ſome ingenious inſults on the modeſty of matrons. Raviſh a great number of virgins, and ſee that they are all in the height of beauty and purity of innocence. When you have fired all the houſes, and cut the throats of ten times the number of inhabitants they contained, exerciſe all manner of barbarity on the dead bodies. And that you may extend the ſcene of miſery, let ſome eſcape, but all naked. Tear their uncovered limbs; cut their feet for want of ſhoes; harden the hearts of the peaſants againſt them, and arm the elements with unuſual rigour for their perſecution: drench them with rain, benumb them with froſt, and terrify them with thunder and lightening.

If in writing voyages and travels, you have occaſion to ſend meſſengers through an uninhabited country, do not be over-tender or ſcrupulous how you treat them. You may ſtop them at rivers, and drown all their ſervants and horſes: infeſt them with fleas, lice and muſquitos; and when they have been eaten ſufficiently with theſe vermin, you may ſtarve them to a deſire of eating one another; and if you think it will be an ornament to your hiſtory, e'en caſt the lots and ſet them to dinner. But if you do this, you muſt take care that the Savage chief to whom they are ſent, does not treat them with man's fleſh; becauſe it will be no novelty: I would rather adviſe you to alter the bill of fare to an elephant, a rinoceros, or an alligator. The King and his court will of courſe be drinking out of human ſkulls; but what ſort of liquor you can fill them with, to ſurprize an European